

REMEDATION AND REDEVELOPMENT NEWS FROM WISCONSIN DNR

DNR Response to PECFA Audit

Following is a summary of some of Secretary Meyer's comments excerpted from DNR's response to the Legislative Audit Bureau's (LAB) PECFA audit:

"Everyone agrees that changes are needed to ensure the fund is available to protect our state's valuable groundwater resources and to provide financial assistance to those who need it most. In the past two years, the Department of Natural Resources has made many changes to the way environmental standards are applied to contaminated sites to make it easier and cheaper to clean up sites.

However, I believe the LAB report does not present a balanced picture of all the factors contributing to PECFA's financial problems, and does not accurately describe the department's environmental cleanup program and its efforts to curb cleanup costs. There are many available solutions to eliminate PECFA's deficit without weakening groundwater standards which would further jeopardize the safety of our drinking water supplies. I believe that many of the report's comparisons and observations are based on inaccurate and outdated information. Many of our rules have been changed or are currently being improved to allow flexible, site-specific cleanups instead of one-size-fits-all solutions.

We are well on our way to addressing all the changes that LAB recommends. I am committed to working with Commerce and others to make the PECFA program work better. With open and honest communication, and a willingness to address the difficult legislative issues, a proper balance can be found between PECFA expenses and expenditures while sites with petroleum contamination continue to be cleaned up."

Note to readers: We regret a previous miscommunication regarding the version of the audit on LAB's web site, which arose from a misunderstanding between the Audit Bureau and DNR. The full audit report and agency responses will eventually be available on LAB's web site, but there is no specific schedule.

RR Program Initiates "First In - First Out" Reviews for Fee Based Submittals

Last month the Remediation and Redevelopment Program initiated a new statewide system for review of technical submittals. The new system is designed to minimize the response time for reviews that include fees.

Each region will divide new submittals into four groups: 1) Certificate of Completion, or VPLE, Sites (NR 750); 2) Case Closure Reviews (NR 726); 3) All other fee based submittals made under NR 749; and 4) Other submittals without fees.

Regions will balance their work among the first three groups to ensure that all submittals with fees are reviewed in approximately the same time frame, with submittals reviewed in the order in which they are received. If the program determines that some regions are able to manage the volume of submittals more quickly than others, the program will consider options to address the differences.

The fourth group of sites, which do not include fees, includes some reviews that must be completed, such as Superfund reviews and state lead cleanup contracts (Environmental Fund). Regional managers will ensure that these reviews are completed, and will do their best to provide some oversight of other submittals.

The program has also established a six month trial period during which upper management may grant exemptions to the "first in - first out" process, based on extenuating circumstances. Any such requests need to be routed through technical staff and/or regional RR program supervisors to Regional Air & Waste Leaders, who in turn will discuss the request with the Air & Waste Division Administrator.

September "ReNews" newsletter available on Web

The September 1998 RR program newsletter, "ReNews", is available on the RR program's website general information page. Our web site is located at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/rr>.

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